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London & Area Edition

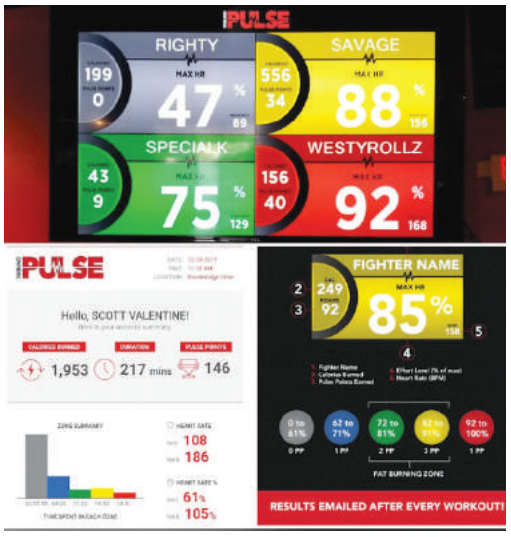
Monitoring progress with PULSE

9ROUND PULSE TRAIN. TRACK. TRIUMPH.

Submitted by 9Round London

Let's face it: we all lack motivation and accountability sometimes during our workouts. Even the most seasoned athletes have off days where they just can't get themselves going. Luckily, 9Round's PULSE heart rate system helps to track your progress while also ensuring that you get a killer workout every time!

How does it work? The PULSE heart rate monitor can be worn during every 9Round workout and connects through Bluetooth to the PULSE system and our big screen. This way, your real-time workout data is both tracked and sent to you through email and displayed throughout your workout – so that both you and your trainer can see how hard you're working! If you aren't putting in your best effort, your trainer will know to give you some extra motivation so that you can see optimal results.



9Round London is using the PULSE heart rate system to gauge workouts and ensure that members are getting the most out of their exercise efforts! The system tracks heart rate, calories burned, overall effort, and time spent in peak fat-burning zones – and then emails the results to you!

9Round's PULSE system is unique because it tracks more than just your heart rate. PULSE uses your individual, unique information to calculate your maximum heart rate, which can then be used to track calories burned, your time spent in fat-burning zones, and your overall effort. The PULSE system emails you after your workout to give you a full summary, including the amount of PULSE points earned. The PULSE points reflect time spent in peak fat-burning zones – when your workout is most effective and your heart rate isn't too high or too low.

That being said, the PULSE system isn't all about numbers and statistics. 9Round also holds monthly challenges using the heart rate monitors to win prizes. Nothing motivates you to get a killer workout more than the chance to win some awesome swag! Challenges also bring our 9Round family together with some friendly competition. This month, 9Round is holding a 'Holiday Hustle' challenge where the member with the highest attendance will win. This challenge is not only fun, but it helps to keep accountability throughout the busy holiday season when people are busy travelling and indulging.

So, what are you waiting for? The PULSE system is available for every 9Round member and is included when you sign up. It's just another way that 9Round is making members stronger in 30 minutes – both physically and mentally! Check out PULSE and 9Round to take advantage of their deals before the end of the year.

thelineup

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Special thanks to Power Cheer Vipers for the cover photo.

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Starting from the ground up

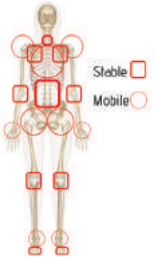
Submitted by Coach Rory Kosonic, Owner, RPG Training Systems

'Starting from the ground up' is the best way to develop an effective coaching or training program – whether it is in the weight room, on the court, or on the ice or diamond.

First – consider, contemplate and create the purpose, values and goals of the organization or team. It cannot be overstated that an organization (or program) that does not have a clearly defined 'guide-book' is subject to failure.

Second – develop strategies to achieve your goals. In the weight room, it is essential that we look at an athletes' physical abilities (ie. testing) to determine the starting point and long-term development pathway of the athlete. Coaches, similarly, must evaluate the players' abilities, then prepare a plan for the season. It is unproductive to develop a plan without understanding the skills and athletes to execute the desired plan. Instead, build a plan around the strengths of the athletes, and develop other skills to complement.

Third – when designing a strength program, the 'ground-up' approach looks at fundamental movement competency first, before attempting to develop sport-specific abilities. Far too often, 'trainers' and parents push athletes to adopt an adult-style training program before measuring or assessing their capacity to perform basic non-structured movements or fundamental movement/motor skills patterns, like running, skipping, throwing, etc.



The Joint-by-Joint Approach

RPG athlete Julia Murmann has accepted an offer to U of T

Fourth – after assessing your athletes, and discovering their strengths and limiting factors, the plan should be to build an environment that challenges the athletes to learn, adapt and grow, with a movement-focused training program that addresses ankle, hip, torso and shoulder mobility and stability.

To read more, and to learn how RPG designs our programs, visit our blog at www.rpgtrainingsystems.com/blog.

www.rpgtrainingsystems.com

RPG coaches JJ, Leah and Rory with the London Sharks volleyball program

RPG athletes Ava, Syd and Jas at Team O Camp

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Is 'sexting' a crime?

By Michael Johnson

For the first time in 2012, the word 'sexting' was listed in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

Sexting is sending, receiving, or forwarding 'sexually explicit' messages, photographs, or images, primarily between mobile phones, of oneself to others.

When is Sexting NOT illegal?

- When photos, videos and conversations are shared between consenting adults (over 18); and
- Photos, videos or conversations are shared only between the consenting parties and no one else, without permission of the sending person(s).

If you, as a consenting party to a sexually explicit photo, video or conversation, transmit any content without the consent of the sender, you could be charged with the following:

62.1(1) Criminal Code of Canada

Every one who knowingly publishes, distributes, transmits, sells, makes available or advertises an intimate image of a person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not give their consent to that conduct, or being reckless as to whether or not that person gave their consent to that conduct, is guilty:

- (a) of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years; or
- (b) of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

'Intimate Image,' to be clear is:

'a visual recording of a person made by any means including a photograph, film or video recording wherein the person is nude, is exposing his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts or is engaged in explicit sexual activity, in respect of which, at the time of the recording, there were circumstances that gave rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy' - Criminal Code

Intimate Image Protection Act

Manitoba has an Act that protects and allows victims to sue the person who shares images or recordings which were sent with a reasonable expectation of privacy without the consent of the sender. It will not be long before Ontarians are protected by the same Act.

What if I'm under 18?

According to the Supreme Court of Canada in R v Sharpe, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 45, 2001 SCC 2 at para 115-118, there are limited situations where youth can express themselves by creating and keeping intimate images of themselves. The law will not normally get involved in situations where:

1. A youth (under 18 years old) creates an intimate image or video alone and keeps it to themselves, for their own private use only.
2. A youth (under 18 years old) creates and keeps an intimate image or video of themselves if:

- 1. Each person voluntarily agrees to participate;
- 2. The intimate image or video shows lawful sexual activity;
- 3. The intimate image or video stays private between both people in the image/video; and
- 4. There is no abuse of power between the people involved.

Keep in mind, youths, this exception only applies when consent is present from both people shown in the intimate image or video. Also remember that with today's ever-changing technology, it becomes almost impossible to destroy something that has been created.

Any image or video of a youth under the age of 18 who is naked – in part or in whole – or is engaging in a sexual act is considered **child pornography** pursuant to **s. 163.1(4)** of the Criminal Code.

This means that a youth, under the age of 18, who is in possession of intimate images or videos of another person, could be charged with child pornography-related offences.

As an example, if a 15-year-old boy requested intimate images from his 14-year-old girlfriend, and then shared this content with his friends via Snapchat, Facebook or Instagram, that 15-year-old boy would be charged with the possession of child pornography (R v X., 2016 NLPC 81303).

Are you worried there may be intimate images or videos of you online? Here's what to do:

If you think it is possible that someone may share intimate images or videos of you without your consent, you may request a **Peace Bond** from Criminal Court which will order the person **NOT** to share them. The Police may assist you with this. If the person does not follow this order, they are committing a crime and can be charged.

Think first before sending out intimate images or videos.

THE BOTTOM LINE: It may be difficult to establish consent if done outside message boards or in the company of people who may be called as credible witnesses, should you find yourself in a position where you are facing criminal charges. Classic examples include bad break-ups and friendship relationship breakdowns.

Be careful with whom you share your naked photos; it can lead you to JAIL and/or ruin your CAREER!

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All about community

Submitted by YMCA

We feel it is important to have a Y in our community for so many reasons, and we're really happy to tell you why! What does the Y mean for a community? A community like London?

Let me first tell you about Eric. In 2007, Eric was 120 pounds overweight, battling diabetes, anxiety and depression. After joining the Y, he lost 145 pounds and no longer needs medication. Today, Eric is a YMCA personal trainer and fitness instructor. For him, the Y means accomplishment.

I'd also like to tell you about Valerie. Twenty-five years ago, Valerie joined the Y and has done pretty much every different class we offer. She says the Y keeps her young – even at 90, I should add. For her, the Y means vitality.

You can ask any of our members here, including parents with kids in childcare, and families that participate in programs, and you will hear them say that the Y means community. It means welcoming, it means belonging, it means opportunity. We are so happy to be in London. If you have never been in our Y, please come in, we'd love you to be a part of our Y community.

www.ymcawo.ca

At the YMCA, people from all walks of life enjoy community and a sense of belonging while participating in activities that benefit them physically and mentally!

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The benefits of FMS Screening

PRO FUNCTION sports injury clinic

Submitted by Pro Function Sports Injury Clinic

Before the baseball season got into full swing, the Great Lake Canadians 15U, 16U, 17U, and 18U teams completed their annual Functional Movement Screening (FMS) with Pro Function Sports Injury Clinic at the Centrefield Sports Complex. Seventy-five athletes completed the series of seven movement tests, which are designed to help identify potential areas of injury – as well as areas of weakness/limited mobility.

The reigning CPBL 16U champion Great Lake Canadians team, pictured here with Merissa Clowater, Jamie Easter, Dr. Nicole Thornicroft, Dr. Jordan Kersten, Dr. Joseph (Chiropractors).

What does FMS consist of?

The FMS Screen consists of a series of tests which assess mobility and stability through seven different movements. These movements give the practitioner a good idea of how an athlete is moving overall and may also reveal particular areas of concern, such as reduced range of motion or muscle weakness. If areas of concern are identified, the practitioner can then address them by providing exercises to help correct the faulty movement.

How is the FMS data put to use?

The information gathered during an FMS Screen can be used by coaches, trainers, and clinicians to help athletes maximize their performance during on-season practice and play. By identifying areas of weakness or reduced mobility, an athlete has the information they need to proactively work on improving potential areas of injury or areas of weakness rather than working reactively if an injury occurs. With yearly testing, Pro Function can also track an athlete's progress over time.

If you would like to up your game and address areas of weakness or limited mobility, contact Pro Function today to see if we can help you maximize your performance!

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Mets play for many reasons

Submitted by London Mens Baseball League

There is something special about being at the ballpark and playing the game of baseball. It always has been – and continues to be – a great sport that requires a varied skillset in order to be effective.

In the London Mens Baseball League (LMBL), the Mets are one of 14 teams that take to the diamond and compete each week throughout the summer. Formerly known as the Astros, the Mets have existed under this name for the past four years.

Following the leadership of player/coach Brad Nuttall, the team has steadily improved each of the past four years – not only in the win/loss column, but also in their level of compete on the field. Brad, who is affectionately known as 'Nutsy,' notes: "We play hard, but we leave it on the field. The post game BBQ's and diet colas are also great team builders."

When the Mets were asked 'Why baseball?', the resounding response related to the joy of the game and the social element that baseball provides.

League standout, Dan Skinner, responded, "We play for fun and to enjoy summer."

In Jeff Green's viewpoint, "It's for the competition, but more importantly to hang with a great bunch of guys."

Bob Pearson's summary was to the point: "It's more fun than not playing," he said.

The Mets prove that baseball is a game for all ages, as they showcase players whose ages are between 30 and 82!

With next season just around the corner, the Mets look forward to the opportunity to relive their glory days and get back in the swing of things with the great game of baseball!

www.lmblbaseball.ca

The Mets of the LMBL: Front row (left to right): Sean Flaherty, Serge Manso, Jeff Green, Brian Morrison, Geoff Craig, Jimmy Edwards. Back row: Andrew Miller, Brad Nuttall, Al Campbell, Gary Berenz, Aaron Boyle, Dan Grey, Bob Pearson. Absent: Dan Skinner, Jacob Keitel, Rob Simms.

ABOUT LONDON MENS BASEBALL LEAGUE

The LMBL is a drafting league, as all new players register as individuals and are allocated to the existing 14 teams in April through the league drafting process. We do not accept team entries.

We are a recreational league, but playing experience is recommended. Players must be cognizant of their abilities, as baseball can be a dangerous game for those lacking the basic skills necessary. Our league ranges in age from 30-80+.

Registration for 2020 is now open. Visit our website for more information or to register: www.LMBLBaseball.ca

The art of building a roster

Contributions by London Majors Staff and photos by Matt Hiscox Photography

London Majors co-owner, Roop Chanderdat, wears many hats. One is that of General Manager (GM), where he's responsible for recruiting and signing players for the next ball season. This is Chanderdat's 15th year as GM of the Majors, and it might be his most difficult yet in putting together a talented roster.

A major reason is because of significant roster turnover. Last year, the team lost of a core group of local players who moved on for various 'life' issues (work, family time commitment, etc.). That meant the loss of four starting position players (2B Chris McQueen, SS Keith Kandel, OF Humberto Ruiz and utility player RJ Fuhr) and a starting pitcher (Corey Hammond).

"These guys were major contributors to the success of our team for many years," says Chanderdat, whose team finished 18-18 during the regular season last summer before bowing out of the Intercounty playoffs in the first round, losing a best-of-seven series against the Welland Jackfish.

Meanwhile, the team is expected to lose additional players this year, including INF Carlos Arteaga, 1B Kyle Gormandy, 3B Steve Froese and P Braeden Ferrington.

Roop Chanderdat, the London Majors' co-owner, general manager and field manager, is having a busy offseason in 2019-2020 as he looks to recruit numerous new players for the 2020 season after significant roster turnover the last two years.

"The reality is that it's a big-time commitment to play in the IBL," says Chanderdat, the all-time winningest field manager (another hat he wears) in Majors history. "Once guys hit a certain age or period in their lives, it becomes

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Winter means working on skills

Submitted by Centrefield Sports

While the offseason has kicked into high gear, Centrefield Sports offers a great opportunity to keep working hard during the long winter months. With athletes from multiple sports, including soccer, ultimate Frisbee, baseball, softball, and football coming in to train every day, it's like you're never truly out of season!

Our clinics kick off our winter months, where players from the ages of 5 to 17 can work on skills such as hitting, fielding, pitching and catching, while learning the fundamentals of the game. The first set of 2020 clinics run for the months of January and February, while another opportunity to train weekly with the pros is available for March and April. Registration is open to players of all skill levels, and our professional coaching staff helps players in groups and individually. Call in or register online today!

With our Fall programming wrapped up, our Rookie and Mosquito leagues have also come to an end. Our instructional leagues are run by Shane Davis and Larry Balkwill, two of many talented instructors here at Centrefield Sports (CFS). Shane and Larry will also be running the Peewee league for players born in 2007 and 2008 starting in January. Keep an eye out for an opportunity to register for our wind-up to season leagues, which runs every Saturday during the month of April.

We will also be hosting a week-long camp over March Break, which will include a progress report and a CFS t-shirt for players attending the full week. With registration opening in late January, this camp typically fills up quickly, so be sure to register your player right away!

With winter and our busiest season at CFS upon us, we encourage everyone to call in and book cages or check online before coming in, so we can accommodate everyone looking to use the facility. Space is limited, so be sure to book your teams in for their pre-season training needs ASAP to ensure you do not miss out!

www.centrefieldsports.com

At Centrefield Sports, ballplayers have the opportunity to improve their skills during the offseason, with the help of top-notch instructors – many of whom are former pros. Meanwhile, the facility also provides opportunities for soccer, ultimate frisbee and football!

extremely difficult to sacrifice their entire summer to baseball."

In order to replace lost talent, Chanderdat is busy during the offseason, scouring talent – far and wide – to put together the best Majors team he can. Usually, 16 to 18 of the team's 25-man roster consists of local players and players in the surrounding region. Other Canadian players are recruited from various locales, while Chanderdat also signs international players (the IBL allows four 'import' players per team).

"I have built up a good network of scouts, agents and former players from several countries, including the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, United States, and Japan, and this helps me in acquiring my import players for the season," says Chanderdat, who has had great success over the years nabbing top-end international talent – players who have significantly contributed to the team's pursuit of an IBL championship. "Typically, I'll use two import spots on starting pitchers and the other two on position players."

Long-time fan favourite Majors star Cleveland Brownlee was originally an import player, recruited from the U.S. before embarking on a highly successful Majors career as a power-hitting first baseman. Brownlee and his family now make their home in London.

Chanderdat began his recruiting work in October, and he's been busy since in his efforts to build a winning ballclub for 2020. That process continues right up to the beginning of the season, in May, and often into June before the signing deadline.

"It's a very time-consuming job, and normally you don't get to see the final reward until the end of the season," says Chanderdat. "To find players who are a fit for both parties can be very tough, especially with the number of choices and pathways that players have nowadays."

But Chanderdat is undeterred. Despite the roster overhaul over the last two years, he's embraced the challenge and is looking forward to building a winner for Majors fans in 2020.

www.londonmajors.com

Youth baseball at its best

Submitted by Eager Beaver Baseball Association

Although it's difficult to think about baseball with snow in the air, plans are well under way for the 66th season of Eager Beaver Baseball (EBBA), which is proud to be the longest-running minor sports association in London. EBBA has introduced the great game of baseball to thousands of London youth over the years, providing organized games and practices for players as young as 4 years old right up to 21.

London's longest-running minor sports association, Eager Beaver Baseball, is set for its 66th season in 2020. Indoor clinics happen from January to the end of April, and then it's outdoors in May!

Each season, house league teams from Rookie to Junior divisions take to the fields in May, and continue through playoffs in August. EBBA has adopted Mornington Park, off of Oxford St. as its home field for the Little Slugger, TBall, Rookie, Mosquito and PeeWee divisions. Ongoing park improvements, funded by both the league and the City, have created three first-rate baseball diamonds, a new playground, and the Mornington Park Dugout – a building with potable washrooms and a concession booth.

The home park for Bantam and Midget divisions for the 2020 season will be at Citywide. EBBA's vision is to eventually have all divisions play out of Mornington Park, and each year we get a little bit closer – with special thanks to all the volunteers.

Online registration opened Jan. 1, 2020, and it closes March 31. Our first in-person registration is Sat. January 25 from 10am-2pm (a $10 early bird discount expires Jan. 25). The final in-person registration is Sat. March 21 from 10am-2pm. Registrations are held at our league office on 652 Elizabeth St.

Free indoor clinics (for registered players) begin in January and run once a week until the end of April for Rookie through Midget divisions.

Volunteers and coaches are always needed to make EBBA even better! For more information on helping during the 2020 season, visit the league website at ebba.ca or email info@ebba.ca.

www.ebba.ca

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Paddles up for Pendragons!

By Melissa DeVylder

Why dragonboating? Imagine 20 paddlers in a sleek, narrow boat. The drummer calls to take it away, and instantly each paddler moves in unison. The boat lifts and surges with each stroke as the team becomes one. It's not just about the race, it's about the challenge. It's about giving it your all.

The Pendragons are a mixed gender competitive dragonboat team here in London, Ontario with members of all ages and all levels of experience.

Our main goal is to always strive to progress in our level of competitiveness. In the past five years, we have steadily increased our performance, and we are now starting to attract attention from National Team coaches.

The Pendragons are a competitive dragonboat team in London, which is comprised of both female and male members – of all ages and levels of experience!

We are always looking for fit, team-oriented and competitive people to join us on the water! Your first practice is always free!

During the paddling season (early spring to late fall), we practice Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30-7:30 pm and on Saturday mornings from 8-9 am. Personal fitness maintenance is also very important, and each team member is responsible for their performance.

If you are looking for a healthy, fun, and team-oriented sport, look no further than the Pendragons! Visit us online on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/PendragonsDB

Paddles Up!

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Your Grassroots and Community Program

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Stage of Development	Year of Birth	Division	Training Days	Match Days	Register before February	Register in February or Mach
Active Start 1 on 1 (Parent Assisted)	2017 2016	U3 Coed U4 Coed	Sat. 9:30AM Sat. 9:30AM	-	$75	$100
Active Start 3 vs 3	2015 2014	U5 Coed U5 Boys & U6 Girls	Sat. 10:30AM Sat. 10:30AM	Wed. 6:00PM	$100	$130
*FUNdamentals 5 vs 5	2013	U7 Boys U7 Girls	Tues. 6:00PM Mon. 6:00PM	Thurs. 6:00PM Wed. 6:00PM	$155	$175
	2012	U8 Boys U8 Girls	Tues. 7:00PM Mon. 7:00PM	Thurs. 7:00PM Wed. 7:00PM		
*Learn 2 Train 7 vs 7	2011	U9 Boys U9 Girls	Tues. 6:00PM Mon. 6:00PM	Thurs. 6:00PM Wed. 6:00PM	$155	$175
	2010	U10 Boys U10 Girls	Tues. 7:15PM Mon. 7:15PM	Thurs. 7:15PM Wed. 7:15PM		
*Learn 2 Train 9 vs 9	2009 2008	U11 Boys U12 Boys	Thurs. 6:00PM Thurs. 7:15PM	Tues. 6:00PM Tues. 7:15PM	$155	$175
	2009 2008	U11 Girls U12 Girls	Wed. 6:30PM	Mon. 6:30PM		
Soccer 4 Life 7vs 7 or 11 vs 11 (Registration dependant)	2006-2007	U14 Boys U14 Girls	Wed. 6:00PM Thurs. 6:00PM	Mon. 6:00PM Tues. 6:00PM	$155	$175
	2003-2005	U18 Boys U18 Girls	-	Mon. 7:00PM Tues. 7:00PM	$100	$125

2020 House League play will run mid-May through mid-Aug

Take your Summer back: No House League Soccer June 29-July 6 and August 3-August 10 to allow for family time around long weekends!
*U7-U12 practices will run using Ontario Soccer's Preferred Training Method at a single location determined by registration demographics.

See complete program details on www.norwestsoccer.com

Every effort will be made to adhere to the information here, however this information should not be considered a guarantee. These play nights and times are only relevant to House League and are subject to change based on registration.relevant to House League and are subject to change based on registration.

Calendar of Events

Contact: London@SportsXpress.ca

January 11-12
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Boys, Saunders Secondary School

January 12
Health and Wellness Expo, Budweiser Gardens

January 17-18
Vaughn Peckham Sr Girls Volleyball Tournament, Fanshawe College

January 17-19
January Winter Freeze Hockey Tournament, Fanshawe College

January 17-20
West London Competitive Tournament, Various arenas

January 18-19
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Boys & Girls, Saunders Secondary School

January 19
Kids Skate with the London Knights (Kid's Club), Budweiser Gardens

January 23
41st Annual Sports Spectacular, St. Anne's Centre in St. Thomas

January 24-26
Blizzard Sledge Hockey Invitational, Western Fair Sports Centre

January 25-26
8th Annual Forest City Invitational Dodgeball Tournament, Supreme Courts

January 29
Grandmothers and Over 50 Bonspiel, London Curling Club

January 30
Faceoff at the Forks-Western Mustangs vs Guelph Gryphons, Budweiser Gardens

January 31-February 2
London Devilettes 30th Annual Tournament, Western Fair Sports Centre

February 7-9
Oakridge Aeros House League Classic, Various arenas

February 8
Hockey Day in Canada, Yellowknife

February 9
Sky Zone Day with the London Knights, Sky Zone

February 14-16
Annual Barry Hall Girls Classic (Basketball) U11, U12, & U19, Various locations

February 20-23
Disney on Ice Celebrates 100 Years of Magic, Budweiser Gardens

February 21-23
Annual Barry Hall Girls Classic (Basketball) U10, & U13, Various locations

March 1
Woodstock Recreation and Leisure Fair, Cowan Park Sportsplex

March 21-22
Speed & Custom Car Show, Western Fair District

March 28-19
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Midget Boys, Saunders Secondary School

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April 11
Harlem Globetrotters, Budweiser Gardens

April 18-19
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Boys, Saunders Secondary School

April 26
Forest City Road Races, Victoria Park

May 3
Stars On Ice, Budweiser Gardens

May 9
Professional Bull Riders-Monster Energy Tour, Budweiser Gardens

May 9
Hockey Helps The Homeless London, Western Fair Sports Centre

May 16
2020 Opening Icebreaker, Delaware Speedway

Tricar Field and big year ahead

Submitted by FC LONDON and photo by Matt Hiscox Photography

It's going to be a fantastic soccer year for Canada in 2020 – and right here in London, Ontario. With the upcoming Tokyo Olympics just around the corner, Canadian national teams are looking for success. Closer to home, FC LONDON and London TFC Academy are looking to leverage their 2019 championship success into an amazing year in 2020.

One significant success is the launch of a $2-million private field being built by London-based developer Tricar Group, who held an official ground-breaking ceremony in the fall for the turf pitch that will become the practice field for London TFC Academy (affiliated with Toronto FC of Major League Soccer). It is located behind the Academy's headquarters at 3800 Colonel Talbot Rd.

"Some of the kids playing on the pitch will become the next players that will represent Canada on a national stage one day," said Vince Mazza of Ontario Soccer, noting that over 400,000 youth and adults play soccer in Ontario and that this project will be key in continuing to grow infrastructure to support growth.

FC LONDON president Ian Campbell certainly shares that view.

"For anyone who played sports when you were younger, you remember who you played with, the goal you scored, the game you won, the game you lost, and the friendships that you developed on and off the field. That's what this field will do – it will build memories, and those are going to last a lifetime."

"We are committed to improving our great community in as many ways as possible, and this is another example of that commitment," said Adam Carapella, Vice President of Operations for The Tricar Group. "We saw this as an opportunity to develop otherwise unused land into a recreation facility that will give back to the community that we live and work in. We are really excited that Tricar Field will benefit children of all ages for many years to come."

Tricar is actively working with partners to provide the field for use by kids sports camps and other recreational endeavours within the City.

For more information about London TFC Academy or Tricar Field, check out www.FC LONDON.ca.

www.fclondon.ca

At a ground-breaking event for Tricar Field: Ian Campbell (CEO, FC LONDON); Adam Carapella (VP Operations, Tricar); Ed Holder (Mayor, City of London)

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Top soccer talent honoured

Submitted by Elgin Middlesex Soccer Association

The Elgin Middlesex Soccer Association (EMSA) hosted its inaugural Recognition Awards on Saturday, November 16 at the BMO Centre, and the event was a big success. Twelve awards in all were handed out, recognizing some fantastic talent within the organization, which includes almost 16,000 registered players, over 1,000 team officials, and almost 300 match officials. Award winners included...

Female Youth Player of the Year – Destiny Franken

(Woodstock U13G Strikers)

Destiny showed great leadership and dedication. Her love of the game was shown by continuous practice on the field and at home. Destiny made every game and stepped up when other teams in the club needed extra players. She was first for goal scoring for most of the year and placed 2nd overall in her division. Destiny is a flexible player who has learned to play all positions and even stepped up to play goalie when the team was in need.

Female Youth Team of the Year – Dorchester SC U13G Alliance

This team won the Kick-Off Cup in the Western Ontario InterDistrict League and were champions in three high-ranking competitions (Hamilton Sparta McMaster U14, Umbro Top Rated Super Cup, and Robbie International Tournament). Undefeated and declared champions within their own WOISL league, this Dorchester team was also Ontario Cup Champions. The team plays with a high level of sportsmanship and fair play, and some of the players volunteer (and serve as role models) in the Alliance Youth Development Program (ages five to eight).

Male Youth Player of the Year – Theo Rigopoulos

(Alliance FC U13 Mustangs)

Theo was the leading scorer in the U14 EMDSL Indoor League and in the U13 Ontario Cup. He was nominated by the Alliance RFC Technical Director to try out for the Ontario Provincial team. Theo's attendance at practices and games throughout the indoor and outdoor season was the highest of any player on the team. He consistently exhibited a high standard of sportsmanship. Theo stands as an example to other players in his commitment to excellence. Theo is widely respected for both his ability and his demeanour.

Male Youth Team of the Year – Alliance FC U13 Mustangs

THE Mustangs had a tremendous 2019 season, scoring an unprecedented 110+ goals in their first year of eligibility in the WRSL. They topped their season by winning the most prestigious provincial tournament of all – the Ontario Cup. The boys showed tremendous sportsmanship and did not receive any red cards and only two yellow cards the entire season. They are respectful of their coaches, teammates and referees. Over the season, they developed as a team and individually, with players being invited for provincial pathways. The players on this team are selfless and encouraging of each other, and this helps them succeed off and on the pitch. They are a group of athletes to watch out for in the coming years!

Match Official of the Year – Jason Vaillancourt

Jason is an active match official in Canada's Professional League (CPL) as an Assistant Referee. In addition, he has been selected to Canada Soccer's NextGEN Program, which provides development and training opportunities to advance to the national list of referees and nominations to the FIFA list. Jason is always more than willing to help fellow match officials' technical and experiential learning. He gives back to the EMSA community, as well, by helping with Education Sessions and Active Mentoring.

Senior Coach of the Year – David Day

(St. Thomas SC WOSL Div 1)

David inspires the players of St. Thomas to play their best while encouraging the team to play with good sportsmanship and respect. He dedicates much of his time to two teams in the WOSL.

Mark Franken, Destiny Franken and John Dutot (EMSA President)

DRC Matt McCready, David Humphrey and John Dutot

Rob Ryder, Nikki Johnson and John Dutot

Geoff Painter, Theo Rigopoulos and John Dutot

DRC Matt McCready, Jason Vaillancourt and John Dutot

Jeff Heussner, David Day and John Dutot

Jeff Heussner, Andrew Henson and John Dutot

Bill McCallum

Steve Cobean

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David also displays great character on and off the field, consistently striving to be a great coach and mentor to the players of St. Thomas FC. David always tries to enrich the quality of soccer within WOSL.

Senior Male Player of the Year – Andrew Henson

(St. Thomas SC WOSL Div 1)

Andrew is one of the youngest players on the St. Thomas team, and he gives his best every game. He is a versatile player who can play as a Striker, Left Wing or Right Wing. Andrew always respects his opponents on the field, and his humble character has not gone unnoticed by players, coaches and officials. He was the recipient of two awards this year for his ability on the field and for his positive attitude. Andrew is dedicated to the sport while striving to promote good sportsmanship on the field.

Senior Team of the Year – Taxandria SC WOSL DIV 1

This team is a group of players who have come together across multiple age groups to form a great team. The team reached a milestone this year by finishing first and being promoted to the Premier Division for the first time in the Club's history. On top of this breakout year, one of its young strikers tied for the most goals. These accomplishments were achieved without a serious incident or red card. Several players are coaches elsewhere in the Club, and many have participated in the 'expos' for our young 3- to-8-year-old players.

Taxandria SC WOSL DIV 1 team (J. Hogervorst, D. Hoogerbrugge, J. Xavior, N. Talsma, B. VanBree) and John Dutot

Service Award of the Year – Bill McCallum

Bill has long served the EMSA district in many capacities. He has been a very high-level match official, working at the top levels in the province, as well as an instructor, assessor, coach, mentor, and role model, all while advocating for the EMSA district. Bill was a pioneer in developing youth and female referees. Many in the district have received some benefit from Bill's tireless work. He was instrumental in developing the early iteration of the Referee Association we have today, and to this day he continues to give back to the referee community.

Sportsperson of the Year – David Humphrey

David is an active advocate for mentoring and club development. He has taken a leadership role in development match official programs in the other reaches of the district, and he works hard to connect clubs with the extensive offerings that the EMSA Referee Association has to offer. David has been a very active Mentor in the District to our new and upcoming Match Officials. His passion for mentoring is evident and inspires our next generation of Match Officials to continue in the trade and progress in their careers.

Volunteer of the Year – Steve Cobean

Steve has been involved with soccer in the Walkerton area for so long that his whole family has adopted his spirit for volunteerism, and they all make a significant contribution to the Walkerton Soccer Club. Steve makes an impact at every level of soccer in the area. He helps run leagues, helps run the club, coordinates referees, and he coaches multiple successful teams. The community and all surrounding communities owe him a debt of gratitude.

Alliance FC U13 Mustangs team

Dorchester SC U13G Alliance team

Youth Coach of the Year – Nikki Johnson

(St. Thomas SC U14G Red)

Nikki loves the sport of soccer so much that she spends time doing 1-on-1 with players who want to improve their game. In her spare time, she organizes and runs a tournament while still concentrating on helping players improve their game. Said one soccer administrator of Nikki: "She has the most passion for a sport that I have ever seen as a coach."

www.emsadistrict.com

FCVC proud!

Submitted by Forest City Volleyball Club

Forest City Volleyball Club is off to a terrific start for the 2019-2020 season! Our popular Acorn Development programs are sold out for Fall and Winter, so please register early for spring sessions to avoid disappointment.

Our competitive teams are training hard and have already seen early success as a result of their efforts!

FCVC 13U Girls Evergreen won Gold medals in the 13U OVA Challenge Cup, moving them up to Premier division! We are FCVC proud!

FCVC 15U Boys won their way to Gold medals at OVA Challenge Cup - Championship division. Go FC!

FCVC 15U Girls B won Bronze medals at OVA Provincial Cup - Trillium division. Go FC!

FCVC 17U Girls A won Silver medals at OVA 18U Provincial Cup - Select division. Go FC!

FCVC 14U Girls A won Silver medals at OVA Provincial Cup - Trillium. Way to go girls!

FCVC 15U Boys B won Silver medals at OVA Provincial Cup - Trillium. Go FC!

FCVC 16U Boys A won Gold medals at OVA Provincial Cup - Championship division. Congratulations boys! Go FC!

FCVC 16U Girls A win Gold medals playing up at 17U OVA Provincial Cup - Trillium division. Go FC!

FCVC 18U Girls capture Bronze medals at OVA Challenge Cup - Select division. Congrats team and Go FC!

FCVC 18U Boys won Bronze medals in the Premier division of OVA Challenge Cup. Congrats to these amazing athletes!

forestcityvolleyball.com | facebook: FCVCLondon | twitter: @go_fcvc | instagram: forestcityvolleyball

Basketball and the barbershop

Contributions by Nathanael Morris-Mckenzie

United Kutz and sports go hand-in-hand. The barbershop's owner, Kwami Lambert, has had a passion for sports his whole life, and he's also a proud supporter of local sports teams and organizations. He also employs athletes – including Nathanael Morris-Mckenzie, a member of the Fanshawe Falcons basketball team.

On the court, Nathanael, who has spent three seasons with the Falcons, is a speedy forward with a lot of athleticism. Off the court, he's one of the guys down at United Kutz, where he's been cutting hair for the last two years.

"I love working with the guys. It's an entertaining place, and the job keeps you busy," says Nathanael, who first began cutting his friends' hair five or six years ago – primarily for his basketball teammates, Mohammed, Christopher and Dre. "Those guys helped me excel in my skills, doing whatever I wanted to their hair and designs and everything."

Since then, he's gained more professional experience – thanks to the barbers at United Kutz, where he began work two years ago.

"They taught me even more to make me a better barber," Nathanael says.

Away from the barbershop, he's at school, studying Auto Body Repair Techniques. And, of course, playing basketball for the Falcons, who enjoyed an eight-game winning streak and went 9-2 during the first half of the college season, good for second place in the league. Just like in the barbershop, Nathanael is always looking to improve on the court.

"I think I need to work on my skillset and increase my basketball IQ," the 6-foot-3 forward says. "My goals are to stick to what I can do and know my role. I think our team will go far this year. We play our hardest no matter who we're playing against. Our goal is to always outwork our opponent."

Nathanael (far right) along with teammates and coaches during pregame (left to right): Coach Tony, Coach Jon, Coach Greg, Marco, D'andre, Judah, John, and Nathanael.

Nathanael is no stranger to hard work. And that goes for in the barbershop, too. And just like on the basketball court, his teammates at the shop are all working towards the same goal and supporting each other.

Says Nathanael: "I'm just thankful to Kwami for giving me the opportunity to work alongside him and his team."

www.unitedkutz.com

The Fanshawe Falcons basketball team (and some supporters), including (left to right): Mason, Marco, Coach Greg, Adrian, Coach Dave, Joan (Nathanael's grandmother), Junior, Aldin, D'andre, Alfred, Sariya (Nathanael's little cousin), Nathanael, Zachary, and Hannani.

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Bolts looking to bounce back

Submitted by the London Lightning

London Lightning fans have plenty of opportunities to see the new-look squad during the opening months of the 2019-20 National Basketball League (NBL) of Canada season. The team plays a total of 18 games during January and February, with 12 of those at home at Budweiser Gardens.

Last season, the Lightning posted their lowest win percentage in franchise history while also failing to defend their title as league champions after getting eliminated by the KW Titans in the first round of the playoffs. Their first-round exit was just the second time in the team's eight-year existence.

The London Lightning, who feature a new-look lineup in 2019-2020, are looking to return to their winning ways after losing in the first round of the playoffs last season. A mix of returnees and newcomers will hit the hardwood all season under the leadership of new head coach Doug Plumb.

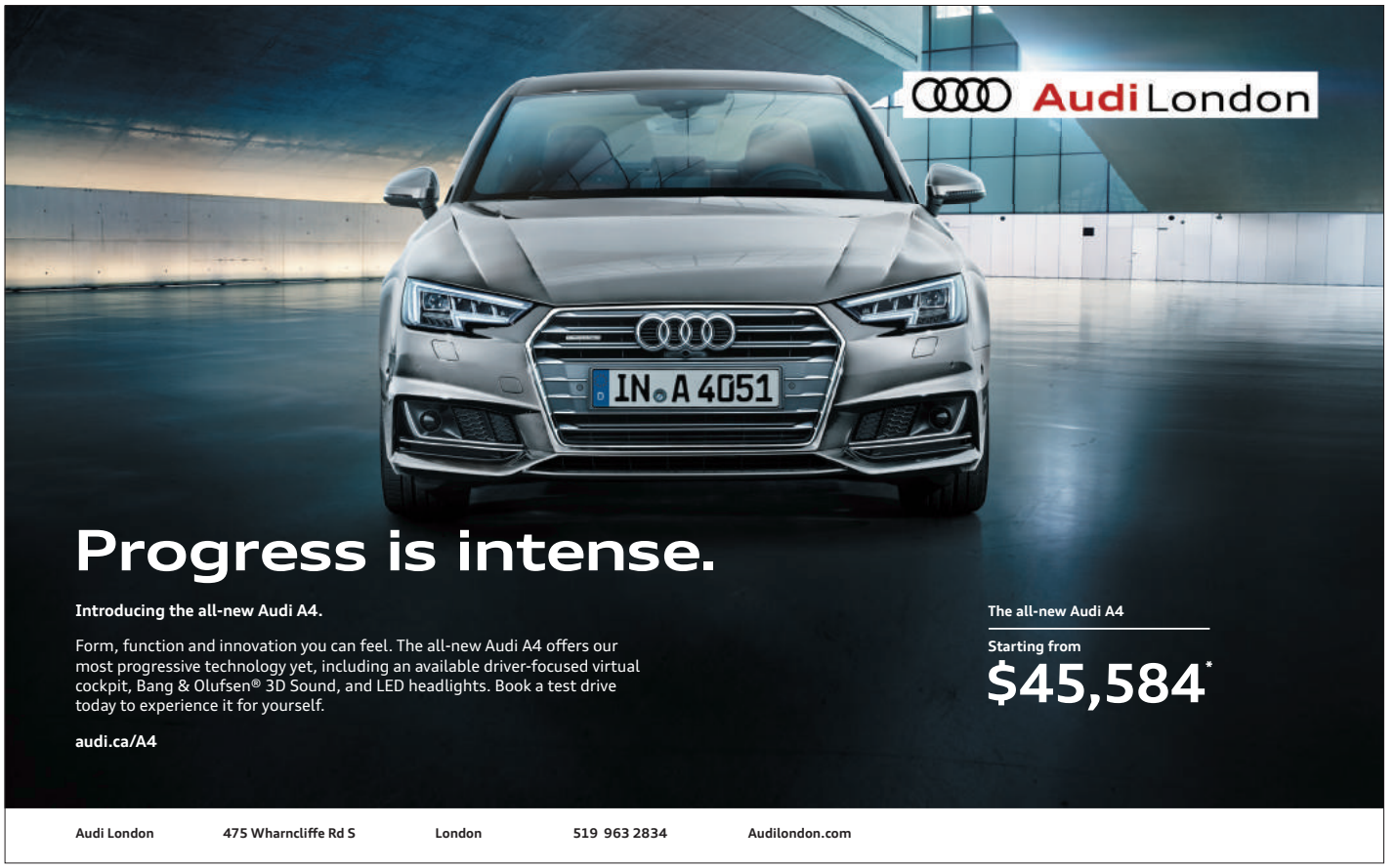
But after big changes during the offseason, the Lightning are hoping to return to their winning ways. The most notable changes included the promotion of assistant general manager, Mark Frijia, to full-time GM status, and the hiring of former assistant, Doug Plumb, to be the team's new head coach (Plumb replaces Elliott Etherington, who signed with the Sudbury Five during the offseason).

Plumb, an assistant on the 2016-17 Lightning team that set an NBL Canada record by going 35-5 and won the league title, brings a relentless work ethic to the team, which he plans will challenge for an NBL Canada championship right away. The former St. John's Edge bench boss will build off a strong rookie coaching campaign where he went 20 and 18.

Training camp featured a number of returning players alongside a promising mix of youth and veteran talent. Among the returnees is veteran Marcus Capers, who returns to the Forest City for his fifth season with the Lightning and sixth overall in the NBL. At 6-foot-4, Capers appeared in 40 games last season, averaging 9.9 points and 5.4 rebounds per contest while doing a little bit of everything for the Bolts. He will be looked upon to bring stability and veteran leadership to the new-look team.

Fans can purchase regular season single-game tickets by visiting the Budweiser Gardens box office in person or online at www.budweisergardens.com. Make sure to stay up to date with player signings and team news by following the team on social media or through the team website at

www.lightningbasketball.ca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Soccer success for men's squad

Contributions by Ardion Kozhani

They've been successful on the pitch for years, and they enjoyed another strong season in 2019. Playing in southwestern Ontario, including in Kitchener for league play, 'Ardi's Team' won five consecutive league championships during their impressive run over the years.

Ardion Kozhani is a former member of the team, while his son, Arianit, the owner of A & E Furniture and Lighting, proudly wears the orange jersey. The family has been playing soccer ever since they came to Canada back in 1999 from Kosovo. Another former member of the team is Fidan Bytyqi from Ayr Drywall, who has been a major part of the men's soccer team.

A & E Furniture and Lighting, meanwhile, is happy to support youth soccer in the community by sponsoring teams and players. But it's not just on the pitch that the team helps others. This year, they held a charity tournament and raised more than $5,000, which they sent to their homeland to help build a house for a family in need.

Back in Ontario, A & E Furniture and Lighting is looking to get even more involved on the soccer pitch, sponsoring and starting more teams in London. Meanwhile, two years ago, they also got more women involved in the game by creating a mixed team which plays against other co-ed teams in tournaments in the area.

They've won many accolades over the years, and 'Ardi's Team' has direct ties to A & E Furniture and Lighting, which is a proud supporter of youth and adult soccer in London and southwestern Ontario.

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- 1 pair of Sky Socks for each jumper

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- Loot bags $8.50 each
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canada life championship

MACKENZIE TOUR CANADA

The Mackenzie Tour proves to be first stop on the path to the PGA TOUR

In 2008, a young John Carlson laced up his skates each day on his way to one of the most dominant seasons by a defenseman in London Knights history. His 76 points in 59 games was eclisped on the team by only Nazem Kadri, now another household name. Carlson's 22 playoff points, one more than teammate John Tavares, led the London Knights as the team earned a berth in the Conference Championship.

Despite the success, the Stanley Cup Champion and 2019-20 Norris Trophy candidate did not start his professional career in the NHL. Instead, Carlson honed his craft in the AHL, testing his game against other professional players for the first time.

Similarly, since 2013, the Mackenzie Tour, which culminates each year at Highland Country Club in London, has given professional golfers the chance to hone their game as they attempt to break through to the PGA TOUR.

This past week, 15 past Mackenzie Tour players earned guarenteed starts on the Korn Ferry Tour via qualifying school. Of those 15, 11 have teed it up in the past in London at the Canada Life Championship.

At the conclusion of the Korn Ferry Tour season, in the early Fall of 2020, those players hope to earn one of 50 PGA TOUR cards given to top finishers on the feeder tour.

Presidents Cup participants Tony Finau and C.T. Pan followed this route, as well as 39 other players who earned PGA TOUR status after playing on the Mackenzie Tour. In total, 85 players who started their careers on the Mackenzie Tour, including 2019 Canada Life Championship winner Patrick Fishburn, will vie for PGA TOUR status on the Korn Ferry Tour.

PGA TOUR winner Tony Finau played on the Mackenzie Tour in 2013.

WHO IS TAYLOR PENDRITH?

In 2015, Canadian Taylor Pendrith took the Mackenzie Tour by storm with his long-driving prowess and precise iron play, winning the Canada Life Canadian Player of the Year award and status on the Korn Ferry Tour.

However, battling injuries over the course of the next two seasons, Pendrith returned to the Mackenzie Tour in 2018 and found his form. One year later, in 2019, the Richmond Hill, Ontario native was as sharp as ever and became the first Canadian to win a Mackenzie Tour event since 2016 at the 1932byBateman Open. Three events later, Pendrith set the 72-hole scoring record, shooting 62 twice on his way to an 8-stroke victory at the Mackenzie Investments Open.

Finishing the season second on the Order of Merit and enhancing his status with a top-40 showing at Q-School, Pendrith looks to follow in the footsteps of friends Mackenzie Hughes and Corey Conners, who began their journey to the PGA TOUR on the Mackenzie Tour.

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Shooting sports: faster is better!

By Bruce Woollatt, Camera Canada

In sports, you've gotta be fast. Whether making the play, scoring the goal, or crossing the finish line, faster is better. The same goes for photographing sports: you've gotta be fast. So does your camera. It has to respond instantly. It has to let you grab that crucial fraction of a second out of all the motion and excitement unfolding in front of you.

But your camera has to be more than just fast. You need to get close, too. You have to get to the heart of the play to catch the heart of the player. And once your camera gets you where you need to be, it has to be in sharp focus. Faster. Closer. Sharper. It's a tall order, but with the speed, power and precision of modern imaging technology, it's within your reach with the press of a button!

Fast shutter speeds freeze movement. But shorter exposures need more light, or your photos will be too dark. This is challenging with indoor venues, which aren't lit with photography in mind. How do you deal with this? Lenses with a larger maximum aperture – or lens opening (often called 'faster' lenses) – bring in more light. Larger apertures also blur distracting backgrounds, concentrating attention on your subject. A higher ISO, or sensitivity setting, doesn't put more light on the sensor, but it makes the most of whatever light there is. Current cameras have better high ISO performance than older models. Using faster lenses and high ISO together lets you shoot action in a wide range of lighting – indoor and out.

Longer focal length lenses bring distant subjects closer. Zoom lenses offer a range of angles of view, allowing you to vary your cropping and composition without changing your position. Non-zoom or 'prime' lenses have only a single focal length and angle of view, but often let in more light than zooms. Powerful lenses can be harder to hold steadily. If your camera brand is not using in-body image stabilization (IBIS), they will usually have it in their lenses. Stabilization helps to compensate for camera movement when shooting hand-held. If this option isn't available, a monopod will work. Remember that while stabilization and support help prevent blurring from camera movement, they do nothing for subject movement.

Current cameras can focus on, and track, quick-moving subjects. More focusing points, covering more of the viewfinder, track your subject wherever it goes in the frame. Whenever you shoot, it will already be in focus. Decisive moments can happen at any time. Continuous shooting mode – ten frames per second or more on professional models – makes sure that you catch them. On some cameras, 4K video mode lets you extract sharp still images from the video stream afterwards.

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Sports photography is all about being fast, while being close to the action and ensuring a sharpened focus in order to capture the excitement of the game – and the emotional moments that will create memories for a lifetime.

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New year, new attitude!

Submitted by Olympic Karate

When flying an airplane, two of the most important instruments are the Altimeter and the Attitude indicator. The altimeter tells you how high you are flying; The Attitude indicator tells you the position of the aircraft relative to the horizon – in other words, whether you are going up or down or flying level. It also shows if you are turning right or left.

I use these two instruments to talk about your daily life. If your attitude indicator shows that you are ascending (going up), then you are gaining altitude. If it shows that you are descending, you are going down. In other words, 'Your attitude determines your altitude.'

With the new year upon us, the staff and management of Olympic Karate Academy are working hard to increase our quality of service, improve our programs, and give more value to our classes and tuition.

We will be bringing Sensei Josh Boyce (4th Dan Black Belt) back on board as a regular instructor, and with his help we will be reaching out to groups and individuals who are available to train during the daytime. We have re-organized our teaching programs for all levels – from Little Dragons (4 to 6-year-olds) to adults – and our new Black Belt Members will have special classes provided for them on a regular basis.

Master Steve has set up a YouTube program that provides extra instruction in our routines (kata) and in the applications of our self defense techniques. Professor Mike Donovan has developed instructional seminars in weapons defense, unarmed self defense and defense without striking. He has been invited to Pittsburgh, Buffalo and Philadelphia to teach these special skills.

Overall, it looks like a great new year for our organization and our students!

www.olympickarate.on.ca

A busy year is in store for Olympic Karate students in 2020, as the club has re-organized its programs and is offering new opportunities for young athletes (and adults, too!).

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Family Karate

Sempai Spotlight: Jake Lindsay

Submitted by Family Karate Centres

Sempai Jake Lindsay is a 17-year-old second-degree black belt who has been learning, studying and competing in martial arts for over 10 years. Along the way, he has traveled across Canada, the United States and even to Europe.

Sempai Jake Lindsay, who has competed internationally for many years, won gold medals at the WKC National tryouts in 2019. The youngster also dedicates his time to volunteering in the community.

Lindsay has won multiple national and world championships, and he has been competing at a world-class level for many years, winning his first world championship in point sparring in 2015 at the WKC World Championships in Orlando, Florida. He competed at the Irish Open in 2018, where he earned two bronze medals and a silver medal.

Meanwhile, Lindsay has also been interested in competing in the Olympic style of karate, and he earned a spot on Team Ontario after just one year of competing. The World Karate Federation (WKF) is the largest international governing body for the sport in the world, with 191 countries involved. Earlier this year, Lindsay competed in Edmonton at tryouts for the WKF Canadian team. He fell just short of moving past the quarterfinals, but he bounced back in a big way with a gold medal in classical kata and hard style kata at the WKC National tryouts.

Jake has been coached by multiple world class competitors, including his head instructor Renshi John Marshall, the owner of Family Karate, who has trained him since the beginning. Along with other instructors at Family Karate, Lindsay has also been coached by Trevor Nash, a multiple time world champion and one of the biggest names in the sport. Most recently, Lindsay has been training with Keith Weston, one of the most influential Canadian competitors in the WKF. Meanwhile, as he continues to grind away and improve his skills, Lindsay has also given back to his community, working as a head instructor at Family Karate Centres and volunteering for the Kids Kicking Cancer organization.

www.familykarate.ca

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The newest travel trend...

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Submitted by Ellison Travel & Tours

Ellison Travel & Tours, with offices in London and Exeter, Ontario, and North Vancouver, BC, has been selling vacations, cruises, corporate travel, and customized tours for adult and student groups for 40 years.

"We have a niche market, in that we customize tours for groups worldwide by listening to our clients and designing a tour to fit their needs and budget," says owner Doug Ellison. "And the newest trend we're seeing is customized small groups."

In this fast-paced world, time – including vacation time – is a valuable commodity, where every moment counts. Checking off iconic bucket list destinations or active passions, such as diving, climbing, hiking, surfing, golfing, or skiing, are all experiences that travellers want to share with like-minded people. What better way to get the most of those experiences than by choosing those like-minded people yourself and customizing those experiences to suit your group!

Consider a family travelling overseas to discover their roots, or friends celebrating milestone birthdays together, or simply exploring a dream destination, making that destination even more extraordinary because those discoveries are shared with your group of like-minded individuals. Golf trips to Scotland, hiking Machu Picchu, diving off the Australian coast, tasting the wines along the Burgundy route in France, or re-energizing at a yoga retreat in Bali are all experiences enhanced when shared with friends or family who have designed their trip their way – this is the flexibility that comes with travelling in a small group.

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Looking ahead to a great year

Submitted by The Little Gym of London

As we close the book on a great year, we look forward to another promising one at The Little Gym. We are so thankful for a long list of fantastic members who bring their kids to class week after week – rain or shine. Many have brought their children to us for years, starting as babies and graduating up through the program and growing as wonderful, well-adjusted kids. We have been around long enough that some of those kids are now applying to teach for us!

We realize there are a lot of choices out there when it comes to children's programs, so we are grateful for all those who have chosen The Little Gym. It allows us to do what we love to do each and every day. We hope everyone had a fantastic holiday season, and we want to wish everyone the best for a new year ahead!

New program starts in February

We are excited to announce our updated Dance Program at The Little Gym: The Little Gym Dance Studio! This program has been designed to meet the needs of the developing dancer while continuing to make learning fun to build confident performers.

The Little Gym of London is looking ahead to a great year in 2020, which includes the launch of the Little Gym Dance Studio, a program that develops a dancer's physical skills and also inspires their passion for the artform of dance!

Up until now, The Little Gym has offered a Dance Program that has provided a strong introduction and foundation to dance with a coupling of gymnastics (and this program will continue to be offered for the younger ages). Now, just as we offer a 1-hour non-competitive gymnastics experience, we've further enhanced our dance program by creating a 1-hour class non-competitive program structure that inspires children to continually grow their dance skills, connect the mind and the body through dance education, and to love themselves and their bodies just as they are!

With increased performance opportunities, and a focus on dance as an art form, The Little Gym Dance Studio curriculum is intentionally designed to not only develop the dancer's physical skills, but also to inspire a passion for the artform – while creating a safe environment to express themselves.

We look forward to seeing many of you back in the first few months of the new year. We enrol continuously throughout the season in classes that still have space on a prorated fee basis. The Little Gym is located in Sherwood Forest Mall in London, Ontario. We can be reached at 519-642-0660, or online at www.tlglondoncan.com.

www.tlglondoncan.com

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It's a gymnastics-filled winter

Submitted by London Beje Gymnastics Club

By the time most kids were preparing for the holiday season, Beje Gymnastics competitive athletes had already started their first competitions for the 2019-2020 season. In fact, tumbling athletes were out competing at the 1st Ontario Cup on December 1.

"This was an important starting point of the season, with the potential for big relief if every athlete made their qualifying scores for April when Ontario Championships takes place in Kingston," said Coach Nick.

As predicted, the competition was tough. But all Beje athletes did a wonderful job, and after achieving their qualifying scores, the athletes began pushing for higher and harder difficulty at the next meet in February.

Only a weekend later, on December 6, it was the boys artistic athletes' turn to compete in Mississauga at their 1st Ontario Cup. With a new perspective at a level higher than last year, the Beje boys performed new routines with harder skills that they have acquired this season. All athletes are progressing and building up their skills and confidence for the next competition, with a goal set to be achieved by March of competing at the Ontario Championships.

Meanwhile, December was also the month that marked the end of the Fall Session for Recreational program athletes. After a few weeks of holiday break, Winter Session commences January 13. Visit our website at www.londonbejegymnastics.com or contact us at 519-777-5208 for more information.

Even though the holiday season is a time for rest for athletes, it was a time for coaches to upgrade their knowledge and abilities to the next level. Beje Gymnastics hosted an Introduction Competition Level 1 coaches course between December 27-30. Among participants included young coaches over 16 years of age who had already completed their Foundation in Gymnastics level.

Beje Gymnastics hopes that everyone had a happy holiday season, and we now look forward to a great year ahead – a 2020 full of happiness and success at all levels of gymnastics!

londonbejegymnastics.com

London Beje Gymnastics athletes have a busy winter season ahead, both among competitive athletes and recreational gymnasts!

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Early success in Season Seven

Submitted by CheerStrike

It was an amazing start to CheerStrike's seventh season! In early November, the Royal Family of cheer travelled to Sandusky, Ohio to compete at the Very Scary Jamfest Competition, held at the Kalahari Resort. This is always an exciting event. Besides the waterslides and wave pool, it was our first time as a gym to take the competition floor and get a taste for what's in store for Season Seven. Based on our results, things look very bright for the Royal Family!

We left Ohio with two third-place finishes, six second-place finishes, and five first-place finishes. All of the families and coaches were incredibly proud of the accomplishments of our athletes so early in the season. Some special shout outs go to: our first ever Youth level 2 prep team, Eminence, for putting a great performance on the floor; our Junior level 3 team, Nobility, for winning a technique award; our Senior level 5 team, Virtue, for winning their first ever competition in our highest ever level; and our Junior level 2 team, Allegiance, who wowed the crowd at Kalahari.

In the new year, CheerStrike travels to St. Catharines, Ottawa, Florida, Kitchener and Niagara Falls to compete against the best gyms across Canada and the United States. Stay tuned for our results from all of these competitions. Besides competitive cheer, CheerStrike offers a variety of other programs, such as private tumbling lessons, group tumbling classes, tumbling for dancers, ninja and recreational cheer classes.

www.cheerstrikeroyals.com

The CheerStrike Royals kicked off their 2019-2020 season ('Season Seven') with a trip to Sandusky, Ohio to compete at the 'Very Scary Jamfest' competition in November. The talented Cheerstrike athletes earned 13 top 3 finishes!

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Striker, 2019 Western Mustangs Soccer

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Collegiate cheer dominance

Submitted by Power Cheer Gym pcgvipers @PCGVipers

The front half of the PCG season had the collegiate teams in high gear leading up to the Power Cheer Collegiate Nationals in Toronto in December. Power Cheer Gym is home to three of the top competitive programs in Canada. The 22-member Fanshawe Black Falcons continued their impressive record, punching above their weight class in the 'University' Small Coed category, coming home with their second consecutive 2nd-place finish in the past two years.

In what is arguably the most competitive and populated division at Nationals, Western's 36-member All-Girl squad also finished second, just a hair behind the University of Guelph but ahead of their archrivals from Laurier. In the event's premier crowd-pleasing division (Large Coed), the Mustangs put on an impressive air show that not only earned them the win, but also produced the highest score at the Nationals. The Mustang squads head to Montreal for their next competition in February. Coaches remind all incoming high school graduates and ex-gymnasts looking for a team to contact PCG well in advance of next season.

Junior National Team Short List

The PCG elite International Junior program, 'Red Ops', was selected as one of the three finalists in the Canada-wide search for the next team to represent the country at the ICU Junior World Championships in April. Last year, Red Ops from London's Power Cheer Gym combined with athletes and coaches from Sarnia's Bluewater Cheer to earn Canada a silver medal at the World Championships.

Western Coed Cheer: The pre-eminent university cheer program in Canada

All-Star/Club Cheer Teams

The bulk of the Ontario club cheer team season runs from January through April, and all of the PCG teams hit the circuit after returning from the December holiday break. Teams range in age and ability from Mini (ages 5-8) through Youth (6-11), Junior (10-14) and Senior (14-18). It is not unheard of for certain athletes and crossover sport kids to join a team – even in the second half of the year. Call to discuss possibilities and openings. The Winter Recreational classes are also open to novices aged 3-12 starting in January.

The Academy Circus School

The Academy held their Holiday Circus Show in December with a full house in attendance. We offer classes for all levels, beginners to elite athletes, and new sessions start in January and run until May. Email meaghan.coaching@gmail.com for information on our acrobatic / contortion / aerial (hoop / silks) / heart / trapeze / anchor / tumbling / dance classes and more! Follow @theacademycircus on Twitter.

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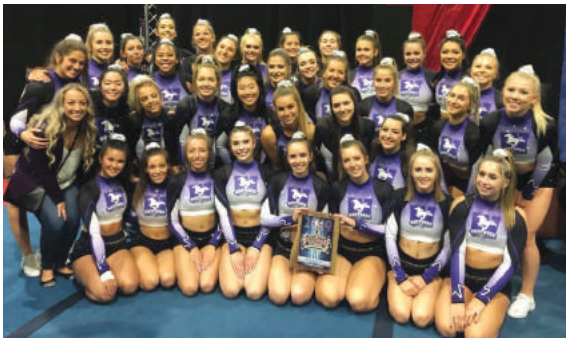

Western All-Girl Cheerleaders achieved 2nd place at Nationals

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Fueling the volunteers

Contributions by Lisa Levy

It takes a lot of work to run a swim meet. Many volunteers spend many hours working hard to make sure things run smoothly. That means they need to be fueled, of course, and that's where Subway comes to the rescue for the volunteers who help run London Aquatic Club (LAC) meets.

Lisa Levy sees this firsthand. She is the Canteen Coordinator who runs the volunteer kitchen at LAC-hosted meets (she also sits on the LAC Board). A volunteer herself, Levy has kids who swim within the LAC's program.

"Subway, and in particular Jacquie Gregg, provides subs to feed our volunteers, who make running a swim meet possible for the kids," she says. "I feed about a hundred volunteers a day with Subway's generous donations."

The London Aquatic Club is lucky to count Subway as a sponsor for its Club-hosted meets, Levy says.

"Jacquie and her Subway team have been fantastic to deal with and incredibly generous to our swimming community – and the community at large," says Levy. "The service excellence and generosity they provide is not seen by many businesses."

It's certainly appreciated by the many hard-working volunteers who spend many hours during a weekend ensuring that a swim meet goes off without a hitch.

"After long hours on the hot pool deck, volunteers are always happy to see the familiar Subway logo on their lunches," says Levy. "We're truly lucky to have Jacquie and her team as part of our swimming community."

And volunteers will be busy in 2020. The LAC hosts a 12&U Celebration meet Jan. 18-19, a Pentathlon event on April 5, and the Hollandia Invitational May 7-10.

The London Aquatic Club 'develops, supports and promotes competitive swimming for people of all ages and abilities in a positive, caring and safe environment.' Its competitive swim team consists of approximately 275 swimmers (divided into 11 different groups) from Development to Senior Gold.

Swimmers range in age from 6 to 18, and from beginner to world champion. Swimmers train and compete for 11 months each year – from the middle of September to the beginning of August.

A cheer coach icon

By SportsXpress Team

He's spent 40 years at the helm of Western University's cheerleading program – a team that has been nearly unbeatable in competition during that time. In the fall, Western's co-ed cheer team won its 34th national championship in 35 years at the PCA National Collegiate Championship, and Coach David-Lee Tracey, or 'Trace,' has been behind every single one.

Tracey has lived and breathed the sport, coaching multiple generations of athletes along the way, all while continuing to share his passion for the sport with people of all ages. A Western graduate (BA '81) himself (Kinesiology), Trace has led the Mustangs cheer team since 1980 while also serving as a Canadian National Team coach and coach of the Fanshawe Black Falcons cheer team (a program he started in 2007).

And, he's the owner of Power Cheer Gym, which year after year wins medals at meets and produces some of the most talented cheer teams – and athletes – in the country. Opened in 1998, it's the largest dedicated cheerleading gym (10,000 square feet) in Southwestern Ontario.

"We've built something special at Power Cheer Gym, and it's a real treat to watch youngsters grow to become extremely talented cheer athletes," says Coach Trace, who estimates he has coached and trained with more than 10,000 cheerleaders over the last four decades. "It never gets old, coaching and helping develop athletes. Our goal is to teach the skills that help create better athletes – and better people."

Tracey was part of a transformation of cheerleading in the 1980's, which saw the sport shift from 'rah rah' performances at football games to much more of an athletic endeavour. And Trace was

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Club dives into competition season

Submitted by Forest City Diving Club

The Forest City Diving Club (FCDC) competed in its first of three provincial meets in Windsor, Ontario at the end of November, as eight national-level athletes – and two coaches – represented the club at the event.

These meets serve as qualifiers for the Canadian junior national championships. Three of our divers achieved a qualifying score, and two divers achieved full qualifying scores for Nationals. Alexa Fung set two provincial records for her age group. What a great start to the year for these young athletes and their coaches, Wing Hu and Luda Zakharenko!

A group of Forest City Diving Club athletes (aged 13 to 17) traveled to Oxford, Ohio to compete in an invitational meet at Miami University, where they fared well while competing against high-level talent – including some Chinese national champion divers.

The Windsor event, meanwhile, was also a qualifier for an International competition in Madrid, Spain, and Abbigail Haygarth of FCDC earned the right to represent Ontario at this international event! (Katelyn Fung, a former FCDC diver who now trains in Toronto, is also heading to the Spain event after earning four medals at the Junior Pan Am Games this past summer).

In December, four of our national-level divers (aged 13 to 17) and Coach Wing travelled to an open invitational meet at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where they competed against a 12-team field that included a mix of university diving clubs and other prominent clubs – including the Guangdong Diving Club from China.

All four divers finished strong on tower: Nathan Marshall finished 4th, Nigel Chambers placed 6th, Camryn Hughes was 7th, and Abbigail Haygarth finished 12th. One of the highlights of this competition was the synchronized diving event on 3m springboard. Abbigail Haygarth and Nigel Chambers competed together for the first time in mixed synchro and finished in the top 6.

Abbigail Haygarth earned a spot to represent Ontario at an International competition in Madrid, Spain.

Attending this international event was an amazing experience for our divers. They competed against accomplished international athletes, including some Chinese national champions. The memories and experiences they brought back will help our young athletes develop – both as divers and individuals.

For more information on our 'learn to dive' and competitive programs, please visit our website at:
www.forestcitydiving.com

ahead of the curve among coaches in Canada. He was already taking teams to the U.S. to learn from their collegiate programs in 1985, and he's been at the forefront of the athleticism and technical side of the sport ever since. In fact, Trace says, it is athletes who are turned into cheerleaders – not the other way around.

"In today's cheer world, athleticism is the key component, and we can teach the cheer aspect," says Tracey. "We're always looking for athletic youngsters who would like to give cheerleading a try. We've turned so many talented kids into cheer champions that I've lost count. And I've been proud to coach every one of them."

'Coach Trace' (far left, with hat), David-Lee Tracey, pictured here with Team Canada.

Athletes and travel consent

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Submitted by Walk-In Notary

It's that time of year again when many of us will be planning vacations – including for March break. There are many things to sort out, but you may not know about one of the most important things to consider: travel consent letters. If your child is travelling outside of Canada without both parents (i.e. either alone or with only one parent), the government of Canada recommends obtaining a travel consent letter.

With increasing concern about human trafficking and custodial rights, customs officials in both Canada and the United States look for consent to travel letters to confirm parental permission to travel. From past personal experience, even athletes traveling as a team (and only months or weeks away from the age of eighteen) have been asked to produce a consent to travel letter when crossing without their parents into the United States for tournaments.

At Walk-In Notary, we are happy to assist you with drafting or notarizing your consent to travel letter (or both). We are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and no appointment is necessary. You can download a consent to travel form from the Government of Canada's website at: https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter.

If you use the above form, simply fill out the information and bring it into our office to sign and have it notarized. Please bring valid photo identification with you. The cost to notarize a consent to travel form is $39.95 plus HST. If you would like us to draft the consent to travel letter, the cost (including notarization) is $69.99 plus HST. If you mention the Promo Code "SportsXpress", you will receive a $10 discount for drafting or notarizing a letter of consent to travel at Walk-In Notary!

If you have a full team of minor athletes travelling without parents and would like us to notarize the entire team's forms or letters at once, please give us a call at 226-977-8245.

www.walkinnotary.ca

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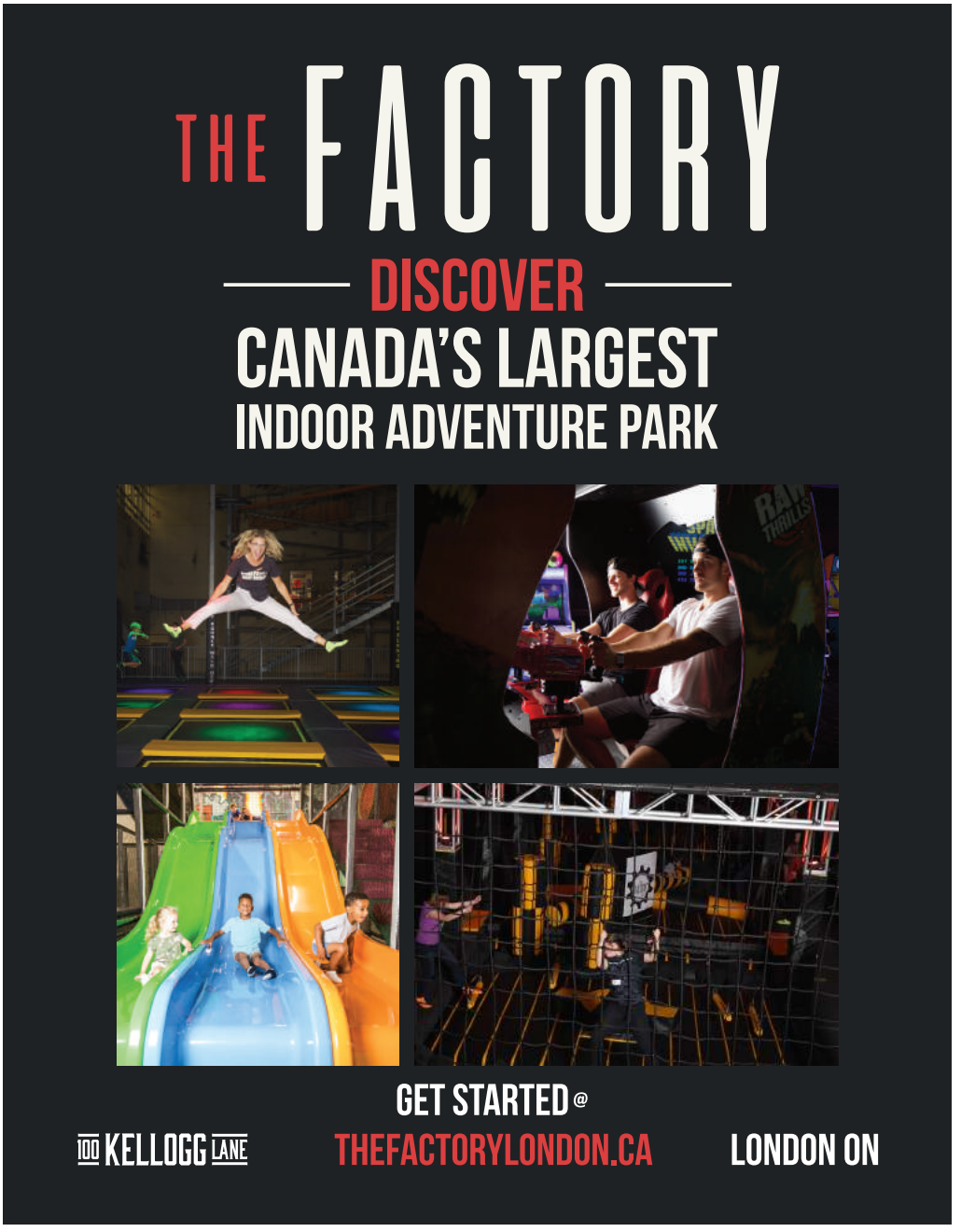

Give the gift of dance!

Submitted by Dance Extreme and photo by Henry Mendel

In a time when everyone is inundated with material objects, and children, youth and teens want for nothing, Dance Extreme knows that gift-giving can be difficult (as it was during the Christmas season now gone by). But what about dance classes? They can have powerful benefits for a child. Consider the following benefits of enrolling a child you care about in dance classes ...

Dance classes can help build a child's emotional well-being

When children participate in dance classes and increase their level of physical fitness, they may feel emotionally and mentally more positive. Dance also encourages kids to release their inhibitions and build confidence. Children can also develop a more positive self-image, as well as improve a child's level of focus and practice. These skills will help a child's emotional well-being in academics as well.

Dance increases your child's dexterity and physical fitness

Kids who train in different dance disciplines see an increase in muscle tone, flexibility, and stamina. Dance classes support good posture and balance, and they help prevent bad habits from forming that can be permanent in adulthood.

Dance can improve a child's social skills

Dance classes encourage children to interact with others their age and to collaborate with their peers. Through these interactions, children may develop new and lasting friendships. Choreography often requires teamwork, patience, and partnership, and children can learn the value of teamwork in achieving goals. This social activity can help kids break out of their shells, develop their self-esteem, and improve their communication skills.

Dance sparks a child's creativity

When children learn new choreography, they also learn how to move their bodies and express themselves. They might be inspired to improvise their dance routine and express their creativity further. Dance may also lead kids to discover other creative outlets, such as art, music, or theatre. Children can be inspired to think and move outside the box, to open their imaginations, and to explore creative new worlds.

Dance teaches perseverance and motivation to reach new goals

As children practice for performances or parent viewing days, they learn about perseverance and hard work. Dance is a perfect creative outlet that balances the freedom of movement with instruction and rules. Dance classes inspire kids to try new things and rehearse to reach higher goals. Dance can help kids learn how to become self-motivated and disciplined.

So, why not consider giving the gift of dance the next time you are looking for the perfect present? These five benefits of dance can positively impact the growth and development of any child. Dance Extreme offers 12-week sessions, and summer and March Break Camp programs that make wonderful gifts for children of all ages!

www.danceextreme.com

Ella Hirlehey, like her peers, not only learns new skills from her Dance Extreme instructors, but she gains countless benefits through the practice of dance – physically, mentally, emotionally, and much more!

Dancing towards inclusion

Contributions by Donna Bayley and Krista Conti

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Sundays 2:30-3:00pm

Contrary to some old biases and beliefs that still persist, dance is for everyone. That's the important message that Dance Steps London conveys each and every day. As a result, the organization has welcomed – and continues to welcome – people from all walks of life who enjoy the many benefits of dance.

For young children attending dance lessons, the benefits can include improved physical health through exercise, as well as the development of cognition, body awareness, socialization, self-confidence and creativity.

"The beauty of dance is that it can be for anyone and everyone," says Krista Conti, a veteran Dance Steps teacher. "It helps to promote positive attitudes and behaviour."

Positive attitudes and behaviour are specifically what are required for inclusion – and for people of all backgrounds to be encouraged to participate in dance in the first place. One major factor is getting this information into the hands of adults.

"Parents need to understand that dance really is for everyone, and they should be encouraged not to let their 'misconceived biases' get in the way of allowing their child the chance to have a great experience," says Conti.

Though progress is being made, biases do still exist. But, just as more barriers are being broken in traditional sports, as more and more women and visible minorities are enrolling in activities like hockey and soccer, dance is seeing more diversity as well. On a larger stage, the NYC Ballet had its first black child female lead (Marie) in its production of the Nutcracker this past season. But there remains a lot of room for improvement on the diversity and inclusion front.

At Dance Steps London, one common theme is the lack of boys enrolled in programs, as society often discourages males to pursue dance – or if they do, they often participate in only certain styles, like hip hop.

The message from Dance Steps? Dance is not gender specific. And it's certainly not a bias that is accepted at the London studio, whereas inclusion is key. You do not have to have a specific look or size – just a desire and determination to succeed and have fun.

And what about the idea that dance has fewer opportunities for its most talented athletes? The reality is, just like in hockey and other sports, less than one percent of participants will make a professional career out of the sport. But all can enjoy the activity – and its benefits – from a young age through to one's adult years.

"We all have the need to be accepted," says Conti. "As teachers, we recognize that some children will need extra help with the physical aspects of dance, while even those who appear to have every attribute on the outside might still need extra help with what's happening on the inside, like their emotions or self-confidence."

The bottom line? Dance has many benefits – and they can be enjoyed by all humans. All that's required is an interest and a desire to participate.

www.dancestepsldn.com

At Dance Steps London, the message is simple: dance is for everyone. And the diversity, as well as the range of abilities and experience create an inclusive environment at the studio.

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Outfitting the athlete

Contributions by Bianca La Marra and Anne Perron

Now in its 22nd year in business, Dancewear Plus continues to outfit dancers, skaters, gymnasts, and other athletes for their practices, competitions and performances. That means providing quality merchandise from leading suppliers, as well as custom-made items under owner Anne Perron's own label, DAKS. And Dancewear Plus attire continues to show up in ballrooms, fitness competitions, cirques, and more.

Besides her entrepreneurial spirit, it was Anne Perron's ability and love of sewing and designing that led her into the worlds of dance, skating and cheer. Making costumes for her daughters, who both danced as kids, opened up this passion for Perron, and she hasn't looked back since. Meanwhile, all the staff members at Dancewear Plus have some experience in dance or skating, whether as a parent of a young athlete or a competitive dancer themselves. In fact, two staff members actively teach dance at their home studios, and one has been a competitive dance parent for over 20 years!

Bianca La Marra, Anne Perron, and Deanna Abernethy.

That staff consists of 10 members in total, each of whom brings something unique to the team. And their focus is on building relationships with customers – as well as studio owners, teachers, and coaches. Brick and mortar stores face their challenges, to be sure, but Dancewear Plus takes pride in its face-to-face interaction with its customers – especially the young dancers, skaters and other athletes and performers who come in the store.

"I always love seeing the faces light up as they walk through the door and see all the sparkle and colour," says Perron, who started the business out of her own home more than two decades ago. "They can come here and be who they want to be, and we feel quite privileged to be part of their journey."

Besides maintaining relationships (sometimes lifelong) with its customers, Dancewear Plus also serves local clubs and dance studios very well by offering various services in a way that's most convenient to them. That includes things like group fittings, group pointe shoe fittings, group orders, and in-studio costume fittings. Meanwhile, the store is the only one of its kind in London that has on-site seamstresses (and one of the only few in Southwestern Ontario that carries cheer shoes). Besides custom costuming and alterations, the store also offers rhinestoning, professional skate sharpening, and blade mounting.

Dancewear Plus, located on Wharncliffe Rd. South, is now in its 22nd year in business.

So, it's not surprising that Dancewear Plus maintains such a loyal customer base – in London and the surrounding area, as well as from afar (for instance, a group of dancers come from Sarnia every year for custom costumes, and the store welcomes a family from Dubai who come in every year while visiting family in the area).

When she started, Perron wanted to create a space where she could welcome all levels of athletes and artists, whether recreational, competitive or professional, and go above and beyond to ensure comfort, and the best fit possible. And that continues to be her driving force today – and what continues to fuel her passion.

"Lately, I've been asked when I want to retire," says Perron. "I say, as long as I continue to get excited about each costume that I work on, and am able to experience excitement day to day, who would want to retire from something they love?"

www.dancewearplus.ca

New milestone for a great cause!

Submitted by Preferred Insurance

Preferred Insurance & Partners hit a huge milestone this year by raising $72,000 for Childcan!

The annual drive for Childcan produced off-the-charts results thanks to the commitment and generosity of more than 100 business partners. The goal had been set at $50,000 for 2019 following huge success and growth over the past few years. But the goal was blown out of the water this year!

The peak of the drive is the massive 'Turkey Bowl' event, which serves as a thank you to business partners and supporters and is also a big fun day to celebrate our joint achievement. Since the event became a charitable initiative supporting Childcan eight years ago, the grand total raised has now surpassed $400,000.

"We are amazed, honoured and extremely grateful for the outstanding support that we receive," says Peter Carr from Preferred Insurance. "The Turkey Bowl is a special day for our business partners, as we invite them to connect with us on a mission to raise money for Childcan. They are an amazing organization that has captured our hearts, helping families navigate emotionally and financially during battles with childhood cancer."

The biggest transformation of the event came from partnering with BELFOR Property Restoration as the Signature Event Partner. This partnership has substantially helped take it to another level, and Team Preferred is very thankful for their continued support and partnership. The event this year included special features and appearances from McClelland Premium Beers featuring Erdinger & Stiegl, Beckham Brothers Flooring / Great Floors, Shell Canada, Classic Rock 98.1FM and Mike Winia, World Champion Master Chainsaw Carver.

"The Preferred Insurance Turkey Bowl is a fun day with a special purpose, and it's proof that many businesses and people joining together can accomplish something truly outstanding," says Carr.

Hall of Fame Partners who made special excess donations beyond regular partnership amounts include:

- Wawanesa Insurance - $15,000
- Gore Mutual Insurance - $10,000
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car - $5,000
- Byron Roofing - $2,500
- CARSTAR London West/East & Downtown Auto Glass - $2,500

We are extremely proud and grateful to have such fantastic partners. Together, we raised $72,000 for Childcan!

www.preferred-ins.com

Preferred Insurance smashed its fundraising goal (and previous record) in 2019 by raising $72,000 for Childcan! Hall of Fame Partners this year, who made extra donations, included (pictured, left to right): CARSTAR, Gore Mutual Insurance and Wawanesa Insurance. Other Hall of Fame Partners included Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Byron Roofing.

Top coaches recognized

Submitted by London Minor Football Association

As the 61st season of London Minor Football wrapped up, the LMFA coaches appreciation night at the Dawghouse pub featured the 'coach of the year' awards, and five coaches were recognized for their outstanding work in 2019.

The London Football Official's Association awarded the Cobras U12 team and coach Paul Politis with the Most Sportsmanlike Team award. This award demonstrates and confirms the LMFA's commitment to teaching great sportsmanship and life lessons that players will use forever.

The U10 coach of the year was Ross Phillips. Ross coached the Red Storm team after being an assistant last year. He showed great enthusiasm and taught sportsmanship while leading his team into the playoffs.

Jeremy Masterson of the Rams was the U12 coach of the year. He jumped in at the last minute after coaching the Panthers U10 team last year and was a terrific leader and role model for the Rams in 2019.

Andrew Coulter was the U14 coach of the year for his work with the Hammers. The Hammers competed hard all year as Andrew worked with student coaches from Lucas high school. The student coaches are great examples and leaders for the younger players.

The 2019 LMFA Coach of the Year was Jay Pearce from the U14 Bulldogs. Jay has coached for many years in LMFA, and he helped lead the Bulldogs to the championship game this year. The team completed community service projects as well. Jay taught the players to work together – both on and off the field.

Looking ahead, the very popular 2020 LMFA indoor skills camps are underway until March at Centrefield Sports. For more information on the 2020 LMFA fall season, or the indoor camps, please visit www.lmfafootball.ca or call 519-852-4465.

www.lmfafootball.ca

Andrew Coulter, leading the Hammers in 2019, earned the U14 coach of the year award.

Paul Politis (shown here) and the Cobras U12 team earned the Most Sportsmanlike Team award.

Jay Pearce was named 2019 LMFA Coach of the Year for his work with the U14 Bulldogs.

Jeremy Masterson, who coached this Rams team, was named U12 coach of the year.

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Winning - on & off the ice

Contributions by Matt Smith and photo by Sarah Juusola

The London Junior Knights Atom AA Green team didn't waste any time having success during the 2019-2020 season. In fact, in their first action following exhibition games back in September, the team won the Kawartha Lakes AA Tournament in Peterborough, ON, going undefeated in their five contests. At the Kinsmen Civic Centre, the Junior Knights earned a 3-2 victory over Burlington to claim the tournament championship.

"This team of 16 young men, and one young lady, have proven that they can play at an elite AA level," says Matt Smith, the team's head coach. "Our primary goal at the beginning of the year was to be the smartest, hardest-working and most-skilled Atom AA team in Ontario."

The London Junior Knights Atom AA Green team: Back row (left to right): Coaches Darcy Thomsen, Matt Smith and Brent L'Heureux. Fourth row: Kingston Spylo, Greg Lukings, Avery Thomsen, Ben Ledger, Carter L'Heureux, Davinn Vigneux, Ethan Warboys, Daxtin Evanitski and Chase Griffith. Third row: Nick Theodosopoulos, Jack Smith and Simon Goodyear. Second row: Boston Juusola, Andy Cho, Evan Young. Front row: Cash Vandergulik and Tyler Giguere

They've certainly fared well on the ice in 2019-2020. Competing in the Alliance, against teams in Brantford, Kitchener, Waterloo, Hamilton, Woodstock and others, the Atom AA Green team put up an impressive record of 19-0-2 heading into late December. In other words, they had gone unbeaten in regular season play and were 27-4-4 overall in their first 35 games.

"We're a hard-working, skilled team that is speedy and smart," says Smith, who is in his second year of coaching with the Junior Knights, an organization that he played for (and was employed by) when he was a kid. "We're always trying to improve our work ethic and hockey intelligence, as well as becoming better team players."

Goal #2 for Smith and his players was winning the Alliance and playing in the OHF finals. They'll hope to achieve those aims in January and February as the regular season wraps up and playoffs take place. But for all their success on the ice, Smith says he's been most impressed by other qualities that the players possess.

"How they treat each other and their coaching staff far surpasses any accomplishment that comes on the ice," says Smith. "They are truly great teammates – and even better people."

Connecting with the community

Submitted by Komoka Kings

The GOJHL Komoka Kings finished the first half of the 2019-2020 season with some ups and downs – and some surprises. There were some big wins – like their 6-3 victory over the first-place London Nationals at the Western Fair in October. And there were some disappointing losses – like the 5-4 OT loss in October against the Nationals (after scoring three unanswered goals to tie the game late in regulation) and another 5-4 double OT loss to the rival Strathroy Rockets on December 3.

As part of their 'Pack The Rink' promotion while celebrating their first anniversary, the Komoka Foodland store was on hand to drop the puck for the December 7 game between the Komoka Kings and St. Marys Lincolns.

The Kings continue to battle for points and playoff position and have made some roster changes – including a trade with the St. Thomas Stars for defenceman Connor Federkow and forward Russell Oldham. The team also brought in 6-foot-5 goaltender Rahul Bola from the Hearst Lumberjacks of the NOJHL and defenceman Tyler Lovie from the Cochrane Crunch (also of the NOJHL). Meanwhile, the Kings lost rookie defenceman Christian Kyrou, as he was called up to his OHL draft team, the Erie Otters.

Centre Dario Beljo led the team in scoring during the first half of the season with 19 goals and 17 assists in 27 games. Other top point-getting forwards included Luc Arsenault (10 goals and 21 assists), Jacob Rochford (11 goals and 17 assists),

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Ice Monkeys having fun

Contributions by Bryan Wilson

It's all about the fundamentals at the Atom age level, and the London Devilettes' Ice Monkeys Atom house league team has been working hard all season on improving their skills – while having a lot of fun in the process.

The Ice Monkeys aren't short on strengths. Most of all, coach Bryan Wilson says, the team is hard-working.

"We have a team full of 'diggers,' meaning that they always go hard after the puck," says Wilson, who is in his third year coaching youth hockey. "And the girls play very well as a team. Teamwork is something we focus on all the time."

The Atom team, which plays out of the Argyle and Kinsmen Arenas, was in third place after the first half of the 2019-2020 season. The six-team house league features another 10 regular season games apiece in January before playoffs happen in February.

The London Devilettes Ice Monkeys Atom House League team: (Left to right) Front Row: Sophia Muth, Mackenzie Wilson, Emma Montag, Clara Roselle, Khaliyah Beeswax, Addison Dow, Emma Decaire. Middle Row: Lea Circelli, Audrey Riehl, Sophie Haarsma, Jillian Wood, Paige Midwood, Cassidy Hillman, Waverly Deagle. Back Row: Jeremy Roselle, Bryan Wilson, Alison Montag. Missing from photo: Madison Neathway and Melissa Cornelius (coach).

Outside of regular season play, the Ice Monkeys have also entered three tournaments, including the CYGHA Panther Pride House League Tournament in Markham (in November), the Cambridge Roadrunners Annual New Year's Challenge Cup, and of course the 30th anniversary London Devilettes Tournaments, which happens January 31 to February 2.

On the ice, the goals are simple, says Wilson.

"Have fun, win some games, and learn to lose in the proper way. And hopefully all the girls will want to come back again next year."

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and Cameron Welch (10 goals and 14 assists). On defence, Dowson Zheng had 4 goals and 13 assists.

In December, the Komoka Foodland store celebrated its First Anniversary in Komoka with a week-long promotion of specials and events culminating with the 'Pack The Rink' game on December 7. Komoka Kings players were at the store during midday to help customers pack groceries and for pictures with shoppers/fans.

Komoka Foodland's Ron Alexander and Lauren Pettinger arranged for a Toronto Maple Leafs jersey autographed by former Leaf Assistant Captain Darcy Tucker to be donated as a draw prize for fans who brought a canned food item for the local food bank drive. Komoka resident Linda Jarvis was the lucky winner. Foodland also purchased all the tickets to the Dec. 7 game and offered them as free admission to customers at the Foodland store. The promotion was a huge success, and it provided the Kings with a boisterous fan base for the game (although not quite enough to earn a win over the St. Marys Lincolns).

The Kings had some tough games in December before the short Christmas break and then a heavy January schedule that will most likely determine the standings and playoff positions. All Kings home games are at the beautiful Komoka Wellness Centre with a 7:15pm puck drop.

www.komokakings.com

Maple Leafs jersey draw winner Linda Jarvis with Foodlands owners Lauren Pettinger and Ron Alexander

Kings players Rahul Bola and Dario Beljo with Foodland cashiers

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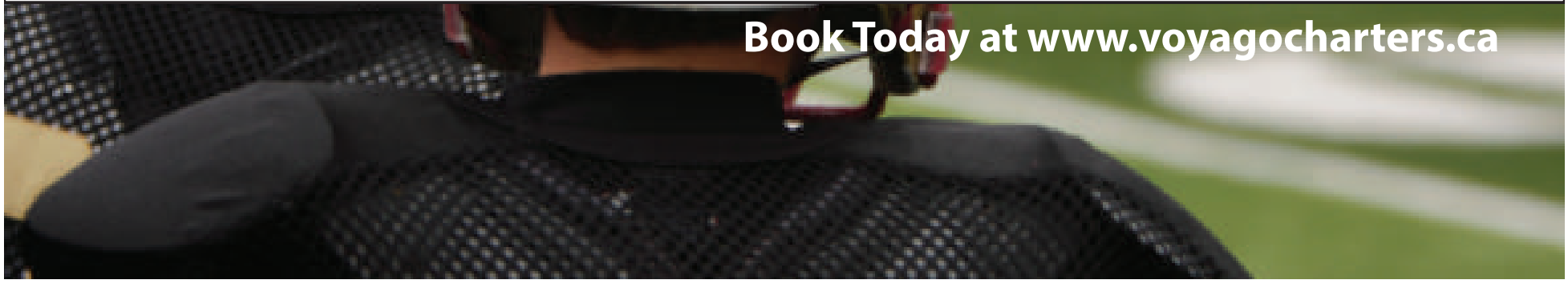

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So much more than hockey

Contributions by Trevor Collver

It's been a year of growth and team unity for the Lucan Irish Peewee Boys Rep (U13) team, which has enjoyed success on the ice – and experienced tragedy off it.

Finalists at the Georgian Shores Fall Classic Tournament in early November, the Peewee Boys squad also went on a five-game winning streak, from Nov. 24 to Dec. 14, in which they outscored their opponents by a 32-9 margin. At the time of this writing, in late December, the team had an overall record of 7-9-3.

Off the ice, the Lucan team has spearheaded a mental health initiative after the tragic loss by suicide of a member of the Irish community. The Peewee Boys team has been raising awareness of mental health and also funds for the Canadian Mental Health Association.

"We continuously raise awareness of mental health at every arena we visit by talking to each team we play in the dressing room and the parents on the bench," says Trevor Collver, the team's head coach. We also hand out ribbons and cards in memory of our community member, and we've been selling bracelets to raise money for the Canadian Mental Health Association."

As of mid-December, Collver said, the team had raised more than $17,000. And that amount is sure to increase throughout the season. Meanwhile, the team also welcomed broadcaster Michael Landsberg to speak in Lucan at an event at the community centre/arena.

"It was a very successful event," Collver said. "The goal we have for the team is to continue to raise awareness and break down the stigma around mental health."

Lucan Irish Peewee Boys Rep (U13) team: Front row (left to right): Weston Gower, Zane Walby, Tristan Merner, Kayden Lange, Grayson Petrie, Lucas Hundey, Owen Schuller. Middle row: Cohen Smith, Michael Chalmers, Brendan Squire, Lane Hardy, Dylan Salter. Back row: Coaches Tyler Richardson, James Chalmers, Trevor Collver and Brendan O'Neill

Chiefs Peewees a powerhouse on the ice

Contributions by Johnny Warren

It's been quite the year for the Elgin Middlesex Chiefs Minor Peewee AAA team (b. 2008). Not only have they dominated their regular season play in the Alliance, but the team has also fared well in tournaments – most notably winning the International Silver Stick tournament in Whitby, Ontario in late November/early December.

At that tournament, the Minor Peewees went 6-1 overall en route to earning the championship trophy, which was capped with a 5-1 victory over the Peterborough Petes in the final. That followed a 4-0 semi-final win over the Detroit Little Caesars squad. In their six Silver Stick games, the Chiefs outscored their opponents by a 28-11 margin.

Meanwhile, the Minor Peewees have simply dominated during regular season play in the Alliance. In fact, they'd yet to lose a game from the beginning of September up until the time of this writing, in late December, going a remarkable 21-0-1 during that span. Their only two losses, as of late December, had come in tournament play.

In late November/early December, the Elgin Middlesex Chiefs Minor Peewee AAA team won the International Silver Stick tournament in Whitby, Ontario. Back row (left to right): Johnny Warren, Noah Mitoraj, Beckham Edwards, Chace Stokely, Parker Vaughan, Ryan Lehouillier, Shane Neusteter, Callum Savage, Rob Fleming, Bob White. Middle row: James Macgregor, Lucas Vansteensel, Will Bos, Ty Lawson, Jacob Vandeven, Austin Brekelmans. Front row: Edmund Docherty, Mikey Kustermans, Luke Thomas. Not pictured: Cohen Kelly

"We have a lot of smart players who are very skilled and very coachable," says Johnny Warren, the team's first-year head coach. "They're really a very fun group to coach. This team is filled with amazing kids."

The Chiefs, who play their home games out of Komoka, have their eyes on some pretty big goals this year, including finishing first in the regular season and ultimately winning an Alliance Championship.

"We're focused on continuing to improve and develop – as individuals and as a team," says Warren. "And, of course, having a lot of fun along the way."

Meanwhile, Warren continues to serve as one of many talented coaches at Snipe Academy (which also includes a recent London Knights alum, Alex Turko, among others), helping develop the skills of hockey players from around the region. The success of the Minor Peewee Chiefs is a testament to the knowledge and coaching success that Warren – and all instructors at Snipe – share with youth hockey players.

www.snipeacademy.com

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Peewee Stars tradition

Submitted by St. Thomas Major Peewee Jr. Stars hockey team

Six years ago, the St. Thomas Jr. Stars Tyke hockey team gathered at Christmas Care in St. Thomas and helped to pack boxes with non-perishable goods that were then made available to those in need in the community. Fast forward to the most recent holiday season, and this team of now-12-year-olds continue giving back to their community. In fact, it's become as much of a staple of the hockey season as their team-first approach and family atmosphere.

This season, the team, which is sponsored by Thinq Business Solutions, once again collected canned goods, but they also took to the ice during the Christmas break to mentor the 2012 St. Thomas Minor Novice Jr. Stars and the 2011 St. Thomas Major Novice Jr. Stars.

For the St. Thomas Major Peewee Jr. Stars, who are sponsored by Thinq Business Solutions, giving back has become a big part of their season. This year, in addition to helping with the Christmas Care food drive, the players coached and mentored a couple of younger-aged teams over the Christmas break.

"We felt as a group that this was a great way for our team to work with some younger players, and a chance for them to share their knowledge and love for the game," said the Major Peewee Jr. Stars' head coach, Andrew Power. "Our coaching staff came up with the drill plan, but the Peewee players took the reigns, explaining and demonstrating the drills and helping them to execute the plan."

Some of the Major Peewee Jr. Stars players have younger siblings on the teams that received the holiday instruction and mentorship.

"You could see how much it meant to the little brothers to be on the ice with the big boys," said Power. "That's the great thing about our team – we are like a family, and anytime we set out to give back we get full participation from the players and parents, which means a lot since everybody has a full schedule.

"I'm not sure who was having more fun," Power said, "the younger kids or the older ones. But everybody was smiling, and that was worth it."

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A decade to remember

By Charlie Echlin

With the new decade now upon us, London Knights fans have the opportunity to recollect on the successes of the past 10 years: Three Ontario Hockey League championships, two Hamilton Spectator trophies, a Memorial Cup, and countless individual accolades. Below are some of the highlights of a decade to remember...

2012 OHL Champions

Entering the 2011-2012 season, the Knights were searching to return to the top of the league. The championship that had evaded them for the previous few seasons was the only goal in mind. With Mark Hunter taking over at head coach, while Dale departed for Washington, the transition from one leader to another was seamless. A total of 99 points was good enough for a first-place regular season finish, which was capped off by an incredible individual performance in net by Michael Houser.

In the playoffs, the Knights were just as spectacular. A four-game sweep of the Windsor Spitfires in the Western Conference quarterfinals showed the remarkable skill and playmaking ability found deep within the roster. The final game in the series was a resounding statement, with London putting eight goals into the Spitfires' net. The next two series saw the Knights only lose two games en route to the OHL Championship against Niagara; a series which saw only five games before London was victorious.

2013 OHL Champions

The 2012-13 season saw the return of Dale Hunter after a successful year in Washington. Though the team began the year missing the mark, sitting just over .500 at the end of October, they began firing on all cylinders in November. From Nov. 2 to New Year's Eve, the Knights were perfect, compiling a 24-game winning streak. The team would not lose in regulation for another two weeks, finishing their streak at 27-0-1-0. By the end of the regular season, the Knights had compiled 105 points, their third-highest total in team history.

The playoffs saw the Knights lose only two games in their first three series. In the finals, the Knights took on the Barrie Colts and the series went seven games. Trailing three games to one, London faced elimination on their home ice. Determined to go down swinging, the team fought back and won that game 6-4. An overtime Game 6 win in Barrie followed (with the winning goal scored by Ryan Rupert), and the Knights returned to London for Game 7, completing the comeback in front of a sold-out Budweiser Gardens.

2016 Memorial Cup Champions

The team that finally returned the Knights to the top of Canadian junior hockey had future household names at the helm. Mitch Marner, Matthew Tkachuk, and Victor Mete all played their roles in achieving yet another 100-plus point season for the club. Though not best in the Midwest, the team wasted no time proving that they were the best that the OHL had to offer. The Knights lost only two games through all four rounds and swept the Niagara IceDogs in the championship series. All that stood between the Knights and the summit were three teams.

After trailing three games to one in the 2013 OHL final against Barrie, the Knights mounted an impressive comeback and won Game 7 at home.

The round-robin portion of the Memorial Cup tournament was no trouble, with the Knights winning all three, outscoring their opponents 20-5. The Knights earned a bye to the finals, where they faced off against the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies. With the score tied at two when the third period ended, Matthew Tkachuk then played the hero. The future first-round draft pick of the Calgary Flames scored a goal that put the Knights back on top in Canada for the first time in 11 years.

What may be the greatest part of these successes is that they are hardly the end of the story. The Knights are reigning Midwest division champions, they have over a half-dozen NHL draft selections on their current roster, and the team is still led by the Hunters, the sibling duo who were trusted to manage and coach the Canadian World Junior team this year. While the decade just passed will always be one that will be remembered as the golden era of the Knights, one can't help but look forward and see a future just as bright.

www.londonknights.com

The Knights celebrate a 2012 OHL championship victory in front of the home fans

In 2016, the Knights reached the top of the summit, winning their first Memorial Cup in 11 years.

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A squash sweep for France

Contributions by Jay Nash

It was a clean sweep for the French this fall at the 12th annual Nash Cup, London's premier squash tournament which was held at the London Squash and Fitness Club and drew competition from around the world. When the dust settled after an exciting Saturday night of finals competition, Auguste Dussourd and Melissa Alves were crowned men's and women's champions, respectively, at the PSA-sanctioned tournament.

The coveted Nash Cup

Dussourd beat India's Vikram Malholtra, 3-2, in the men's final (6-11, 11-5, 11-4, 5-11, 11-5), while Alves claimed the women's final, 3-0 (11-9, 11-2, 11-6), over England's Jasmine Hutton. The result marked only the second time that the same country has earned both men's and women's titles at the Nash Cup.

A draw of 48 participants took part in the 2019 Nash Cup, which was held Sept. 17-21. The tournament purse was $12,000 for the men's event and $20,000 for the women's competition.

"This event is a massive undertaking, and there are a huge number of people to thank for their support and involvement," said Jay Nash, the tournament's host, as he cited 'sponsors, volunteers, organizing committee members, ticket holders, club staff, referees, amateur competitors, match writers and billets.'

For 12 years now, the Nash Cup has welcomed international athletes (from 42 countries) to compete in what has become one of the top stops on the PSA tour. Squash fans in London (and those traveling to the city for the tournament) have been rewarded with the opportunity to watch world-class competition during that time, while also getting to know many of the athletes.

"I can think of few professional sports where you can be mere feet away from an intense battle, and under an hour later be sharing a beverage with both the champion and the runner up discussing the quality of the match," said Nash. "They are truly wonderful and positive people to be around. A big thank you to all 48 participants. You made the week great!"

Planning is already underway for the 13th annual Nash Cup, which is slated to take place Sept. 14-19, 2020.

www.nashcup.com

A pair of players from France, Auguste Dussourd (right) and Melissa Alves, captured gold medals in their respective men's and women's championship matches at the 2019 Nash Cup.

Melissa Alves, of France, and England's Jasmine Hutton, the two women's finalists at the Nash Cup, pose for a photo on the court.

France's Auguste Dussourd (right) and India's Vikram Malholtra thrilled Nash Cup spectators in their five-set finale last fall.

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Bentley Hearing recognizes Sporting Seniors

Eugene & Otto: Men's 55+ Table tennis

John Thornton and Evelyn Nichol are regular dart players at the Community Centre, on Tuesday mornings

At the Horton Street Seniors' Centre (within the Boys & Girls Club), the GET FIT aerobics class is a popular activity among seniors, as it combines strength and conditioning with balance exercises.

London Seniors Tour members get ready to hit the links (Left to right): Paul Jackson, Nick Pasic, Dave Dawson, Murray Clark and Tom Johnston

Lawn bowling is a growing attraction at the Kiwanis Seniors' Community Centre on Thursday afternoons, as London seniors are enjoying the indoor game

Kim, Beth, Jane, Kim and Diane at a recent hockey tournament

Zak, Marianne, Sandy, Kim and Lynn after hitting the ice

London Women's 55+ Hockey

Men's & Coed Volleyball teams: Rose, Pam, Willie, Harry, Jack, Jackie, Bob, Mike, Mitch, Nancy, Brenda, Deb, June

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